

Terra cotta

The terra cotta warriors were accidentally discovered by Chinese peasants while digging a well. This discovery prompted archaeologists to proceed to Shaanxi, China to investigate. No one knows why this site became buried and lost among memories in the clay and in the minds of China. What they found was the ancient burial-site of the first Chinese Emperor Qin Shihuangdi. These warriors were placed all around the burial tomb of Emperor Qin. Before Qin, masters were buried with women, slaves, and soldiers. This tradition during China's feudal period vanished during the life of Qin. To substitute for the actual humans, Qin ordered a massive clay army to be produced for his protection. Qin wanted the afterlife to be the same as his life on earth. Qin produced a warlike culture in China, which brought him many enemies. During his lifetime there were three attempts to assassinate him, so he had to be protected in the afterlife.

The first site was excavated in 1974. Although much of the site had been looted soon after it was built, archaeologists discovered 6,000 pottery figures. This oblong shaped site is 689 feet long, 197 feet wide. The trenches that contain the soldiers are 14.8 to 21.3 feet deep. The actual bodies of the soldiers were formed out of terra cotta clay. Each soldier was baked in a kiln. The positioning of the soldiers in the oblong shape shows an actual battle formation of the troops. These warriors were dressed and ready for battle. They carried spears and various other combat weapons. Each warrior is wearing an army uniform which distinguishes the soldier's rank. The soldier's uniforms were painted either red or green. They also wore either brown or black armor. Different types of warriors include bowman, infantrymen, and among these soldiers are six chariots. Each soldier has a distinct facial expression. Even the horses found at this site have different poses. Both the hands and the heads of the soldiers are detachable. These pieces of the body were carefully crafted and painted separately. The purpose of this was to provide the soldier with individuality and uniqueness. This also shows the quality of Chinese art during this time. These soldiers were made to be naturalistic. The height of the normal soldiers ranges from 5 ft. 8 in. to 6 ft. 2.5 in. Those that rode the chariots were 6 ft. 2.5 in. The commanders were the tallest out of all the soldiers. They stood 6 ft. 5 in. Clearly height represented the importance of the officer.